United Nations E/2010/34 (Part I)/Add.1–E/ICEF/2010/7 (Part I)/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2010

Original: English

Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its 2010 first regular session*

(15 and 18 January 2010)

Addendum

* The present report, submitted as an addendum to the report of the UNICEF Executive Board on its 2010 first regular session, is a summary of the discussions that took place during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), held on 15 January and 18 January 2010. The text was prepared jointly by the secretariats of the funds and programmes.

10-24782 (E) 120310

Please recycle

Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP

A. Delivering as one: Strengthening country-level response to gender-based violence

1. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board opened the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP by requesting a moment of silence to express solidarity and honour lives lost in the Haiti earthquake.

2. Following presentations by the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) speaking on behalf of the four organizations, the Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Burkina Faso, a representative from the UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign of the United Nations Secretary-General, and the UNFPA representative from Viet Nam, the President presided over a question and answer session. Delegations raised the following issues:

(a) While noting successes in Viet Nam, Executive Board members asked whether other countries undertaking a 'delivering as one' approach had achieved benefits in supporting key priorities, such as gender-based violence. There was interest in the United Nations approach to working on gender-based violence in conflict/post-conflict contexts and on understanding how progress on the indicators of Security Council resolution 1325 will feed into the development of new global indicators. Delegations asked if effective coordination was possible in such settings without breaching specific mandates;

(b) While commending the commitment of Burkina Faso, there was a query on whether rape is considered a 'scourge' and on measures to support children born out of rape;

(c) Delegations recognized that while coordination by United Nations organizations improves effectiveness, national ownership is key. Members highlighted that the joint approach appears to be beneficial in promoting national ownership/strengthening national capacities; clarifying United Nations roles and responsibilities; emphasizing the importance of regional initiatives, including South-South learning; ensuring the engagement of all relevant actors; and, promoting system-wide coherence;

(d) A query was raised on the impact of the joint approach on beneficiary populations. While funding and capacity gaps for addressing reproductive health and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings exist, support to the efforts of United Nations organizations was reiterated;

(e) A suggestion was made to undertake a unified United Nations approach to the development of gender-based violence data, for example, via the publication of monthly statistics.

3. The following responses were provided:

(a) While touching upon those countries where a unified approach has demonstrated results, a forthcoming evaluation will provide details demonstrating effectiveness and areas for improvement regarding the 'delivering as one' pilots;

(b) Coordination in conflict and post-conflict contexts is challenging, but the cluster system approach works. Coordination does not undermine respective mandates but strengthens the work of each organization;

(c) Efforts must focus on strengthening national capacities. United Nations organizations can have integrated workplans without a formal agreement. The Zimbabwe United Nations country team gender theme group used that approach without being a "delivering as one" country;

(d) In Burkina Faso, exact figures on rape are difficult to ascertain. The country supports victims under its legislation. However, court system delays pose a challenge and make legal action difficult;

(e) The campaign of the Secretary-General acts an umbrella under which actors come together and duplication is minimized. The violence against women database is a tool that relies upon Member States for input.

4. The President thanked presenters and delegates for their interaction.

Presentation on the One United Nations country programme document for the United Republic of Tanzania

5. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board invited the Director, Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, United Republic of Tanzania, to make the presentation on the Tanzanian One United Nations country programme document. The Director elaborated on the proposed common programming approach, stating that the Tanzanian Government and the United Nations country team (UNCT) had agreed to develop a single business plan, a United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP), for 2011-2015, capturing the entire range of United Nations activities in the country. She emphasized that it would reduce duplication and provide a more collective and coherent strategy aligned with national priorities. She noted that her Government was proposing to the Executive Boards that a common country programme document (CCPD) derived from the UNDAP be approved in lieu of agency-specific CPDs. She outlined the timeline, noting that the CCPD would be presented to the Executive Boards in January 2011 and its implementation would start in July 2011. She underscored that her Government was not seeking to pre-empt the intergovernmental discussions on CCPD approval mechanisms that were ongoing in the context of system-wide coherence.

6. Several delegations commended the framework articulated by the Tanzanian Government, noting that it would reduce duplication, incorporate information found in separate CPDs and result in a coherent strategy aligned to national priorities. They recalled that the 2009 intergovernmental meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, had agreed that in the pilot countries there was no going back to doing business in the manner prior to the 'delivering as one' initiative and that the momentum should be maintained. They called on donors to support those efforts through timely, predictable, unearmarked and multi-year financial support. They highlighted the need to reduce transaction costs and simplify reporting requirements by substituting individual organizations' reports with a single results report.

7. Numerous delegations, in a joint statement, congratulated the Tanzanian Government and stated that the pilot countries were breaking new ground and realizing more effective interventions and that the United Nations was "better" when it "delivered as one". Commending the Tanzanian proposal, they underscored that the UNDAP would meet the needs of the Tanzanian people and the Government and would encompass the entire spectrum of United Nations activity in the country. In supporting the proposed approach, they encouraged others to do the same. Underscoring the stated advantages of a CCPD, they emphasized that a results-based approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation would ensure that the United Nations developed a quality programme and was accountable to the people and the Government it served. They stressed that the approach did not pre-empt or impinge on General Assembly decisions and urged headquarters to keep pace with progress at the country level.

8. The President, UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, asked if it would be plausible to expect that the Tanzanian Government would be able to adapt its CCPD if the General Assembly arrived at a decision only in July 2011 and not in January 2011. One delegation inquired how the UNDAP would encompass all the United Nations activities in the country or if there would be a focus on a limited number of sectors/areas. The same delegation asked how the Executive Boards would deal with reporting, given the different fiscal cycles of countries and the United Nations. Another delegation asked what progress the Tanzanian Government had observed regarding donor funding behaviour concerning "delivering as one". One delegation asked if the Tanzanian Government was ensuring coordination within itself and what were the lessons and challenges thus far.

9. The Director thanked the delegations for their comments. Regarding the President's query, she stated that the CCPD implementation would begin in July 2011 and if the General Assembly had a decision on approval then the Tanzanian Government would be guided by it. Regarding the funding query, she noted that currently the country received financing on a yearly basis and donors were being requested to provide funding on a four-year basis for the UNDAP. Regarding coordination, she noted that the Ministry of Finance was the lead agency and had a steering committee composed of representatives from several ministries to ensure team coordination.

B. Climate change and development

10. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board invited the UNDP Administrator to speak about how the United Nations was supporting countries in addressing climate change in the context of development. The Administrator noted that climate change impacts the poorest and most vulnerable populations; many nations need support to adapt to, and build greater resilience to, climate change. She also emphasized the need to enable these countries to follow low carbon development pathways. She touched upon the Copenhagen climate summit and its success in engaging many heads of government about a future direction. While efforts to negotiate a climate agreement continue, the United Nations must focus on practical work, supporting countries to devise responses that supportive of their development aspirations. The Administrator concluded by stressing that with sufficient resources, broad and innovative partnerships, and the support of their Executive Boards, the four organizations could leverage their complementary mandates in the service of programme countries and associated national development strategies.

11. A presentation was made by the resident coordinator of Malawi on the collaborative efforts among the United Nations, Government, and donors to respond to climate change. He underscored the challenges of dealing with climate change in an economy dominated by the primary sector. Strong collaboration by all actors has supported the Malawi National Climate Change Programme, with the United Nations playing the role of an impartial mediator and broker, and the "one United Nations fund" (a multi-donor trust fund) simplifying funding and reporting.

12. The Associate Director of Training and Head, Environment Unit at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research made a presentation on the training service platform on climate change called "CC:Learn". This was, inter alia, an example of how the United Nations system supports learning and strengthens human resources skills on climate change in Member States.

13. Delegations recognized the presentations as good examples of the United Nations working together at the country level, notably in Malawi. Delegations asked whether the Malawi model and its multi-donor trust fund could be replicated elsewhere. Delegations also supported the idea that climate change is a development issue and that the United Nations has significant role to play. A number of delegations were concerned with the lack of capacity in developing countries to transform their economies, while others reiterated that the Copenhagen Accord represented an important step forward, though it was not a legally-binding outcome. Delegations asked whether inaction in Copenhagen might increase the climate change threat to Millennium Development Goal achievement.

14. In responding, the Administrator suggested it was incumbent upon Member States to determine their own priorities in the context of the Copenhagen Accord. She also said that in the short term, Millennium Development Goal achievement was not threatened, though that could change if an agreement was not reached soon. She suggested practical ways in which the

United Nations could help Member States address the Millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction and climate change, including use of the multi-donor trust fund, an outcome of the Copenhagen climate summit.

Briefing on Haiti

15. A panel of speakers composed of the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme), the UNICEF Director of Emergency Programmes, and the Senior Adviser to the Executive Director of WFP and Special Envoy for 'one United Nations' countries, briefed the joint meeting of the Boards regarding the situation in Haiti in the wake of the devastating earthquake.

16. Delegations expressed their condolences and solidarity with the people of Haiti and the United Nations system for the material and human losses. Numerous delegations spoke about their efforts to provide emergency money, debt relief, food supplies, medical teams and hospital equipment, sniffer dogs, satellite communication equipment, and disaster assessment teams in order to expedite humanitarian relief efforts in Haiti. One delegation expressed its commitment and support to partnerships between all actors as the only way to proceed given the magnitude of the crisis. Another delegation expressed concern at the possibility for deterioration in the security situation and asked the panel about steps being taken in this regard. That delegation also asked about medium- and long-term steps needed to coordinate United Nations and individual country interventions on the ground. In the context of ensuring a nationally owned and nationally led response to the disaster, one delegation asked about the state of the government in light of the devastation. One delegation appealed to members of the media to be accurate in their reporting so as to avoid confusion and curtail any negative psychological impact.

17. The delegate from Haiti provided an update on the situation in his country, thanking all delegations and organizations for their sympathy, solidarity, and contributions. He spoke about the destruction of many governmental buildings and the public servants trapped beneath rubble. He expressed deep appreciation for the show of support by all countries, adding that all Haitians take comfort in knowing they are not alone.

C. Recovering from economic and financial crisis: food security and safety nets

18. The President of the Executive Board of WFP opened the session by inviting the WFP Deputy Director, Policy, Planning and Strategy Division, to introduce the background paper on behalf of the four organizations.

19. In summarizing the contents of the paper, the Deputy Director noted that the widespread and deepening impacts of the crisis on the world's hungry had led the four organizations to focus on food security and supporting national government interventions for protecting vulnerable populations. Recognizing the short- and long-term implications of the crisis,

countries across the globe are taking steps to establish social protection and safety net programmes that mitigate the impact of the crisis on the poor and vulnerable, even under tight fiscal conditions. Countries are scaling up coverage and benefits or initiating new transfer programmes targeting the chronically poor and food-insecure. The United Nations system — particularly UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP — is working to support and strengthen these efforts.

20. The President invited the Director, Ethiopia Food Security Directorate, to bring a practical perspective to the discussion by describing the innovative Productive Safety Net Programme. The objective of the programme is to transfer food to food-insecure households in chronically food-insecure "woredas" (local administrative units), thereby preventing asset depletion at the household level and creating assets at the community level. The main achievements of the Productive Safety Net Programme include: improvements in the timeliness of transfers to the poorest citizens in rural areas; increased capacity for programme implementation; creation of productive assets at the community level; and increased household income and food security. Major lessons revolve around the challenges and value of transitioning from an emergency and humanitarian-oriented response to a more development-oriented approach.

21. The President invited questions and comments from the floor and the ensuing discussion yielded the following conclusions:

(a) Capacity-building to enhance ownership and sustainability is crucial;

(b) International efforts to support national social protection systems must be coordinated;

(c) The United Nations Social Protection Floor Initiative is relevant and could be very useful, if it retains its emphasis on country support;

(d) National and international efforts to combat the many facets of hunger need adequate resourcing, in the short and long term;

(e) The Productive Safety Net Programme of Ethiopia is an important example of how countries can combat the root causes of hunger and protect vulnerable populations, even under tight fiscal conditions, while retaining a balanced perspective in the context of relief and development;

(f) To meet the Millennium Development Goals, Member States must intensify efforts to eradicate hunger; prevention is an essential component of effective interventions, particularly in view of the consequences of climate change on hunger.

D. Stocktaking on the Millennium Development Goals

22. The Vice-President of the UNICEF Executive Board invited the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF to introduce the background document on stocktaking on the Millennium Development Goals, on behalf of the four organizations. The Deputy Executive Director emphasized that, while significant progress had been made in many areas, there was still a long way to go to achieve certain targets. He highlighted several innovative strategies being used by countries to meet the Goals, which were based on successes and lessons shared from around the world.

23. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance of Rwanda and the resident coordinator of Rwanda described the progress being made by Rwanda in meeting the Goals, pinpointing several major achievements, successful strategies and challenges. The Senior Adviser for Economic Policy at WFP emphasized the importance of achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 to eradicate hunger, presenting several cost-effective strategies and lessons learned.

24. Delegations commended Rwanda on its progress in pursuing the Goals and its special focus on areas requiring accelerated progress. Questions were raised on the nature and potential of international cooperation towards global achievement of the Goals. A number of delegations were concerned that progress was so slow on some Goals and targets that they might not be achieved. The panel acknowledged this as a serious issue, advising that the upcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly would be vital in addressing roadblocks.

25. Delegations also expressed concern about the effects of climate change, rising food prices, and the global economic downturn on the achievement of the Goals, especially in certain countries and regions. In addition to addressing inequalities within and among countries, delegations called for strengthened social policies, improved efforts to eradicate hunger, and creation of employment opportunities for youth and women. Several delegations asked about strategies for the promotion of capacity development in recipient countries and inter-sectoral coordination. Specific suggestions were made on how the United Nations could play a role in middle-income countries, act as an agent of ideas, foster South-South cooperation and support evidence-based action by national authorities. Several delegations reaffirmed their support for United Nations system-wide coherence.

26. In response to a number of questions about how international aid could be made more effective for Rwanda and other developing countries, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance said that her Government was enthusiastic about the 'delivering as one' concept and needed technical advice from donors rather than goals. To increase aid effectiveness, she suggested that donors recognize the importance of national ownership of programmes and national development priorities.

27. The Deputy Executive Director reaffirmed the commitment of UNICEF to enhancing United Nations coherence in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals and fulfilling the rights of children. He emphasized that UNICEF was working hard to improve performance and

achieve sustainable results through ensuring national ownership of the Goals, scaling up successful interventions, building systems, focusing on the excluded, giving priority to gender disparities, protecting the most vulnerable during crises, empowering communities, monitoring progress at a subnational level, adopting policies that can have a multiplier effect, publicizing best practices and lessons learned, and working more closely with partners. The WFP Special Adviser closed the discussion by underlining the effectiveness of interventions such as micronutrient supplementation and conditional cash transfers in achieving Goal 1.

28. The Vice-President of the UNICEF Executive Board closed the meeting by thanking Executive Board members and the panellists for an interactive discussion.